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1961/11/09

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Notes on TS conversation with JFK,
at White House - Nov. 9, 1961.

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Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (RG 233)

TS invited by JFK at Hobby's suggestion after lunch at DOJ. Meeting a bit over 1 hr. Dick Goodwin only person present. Miss Lincoln next door. She brought in JFK pix he autographed for Nikki. JFK in rocker, TS and Goodwin on white sofa. JFK wanted talk abt Cuba — continuing conversation of TS with RFK and mainly kept asking questions. Also asked for suggestions and recommendations. JFK knew I had been in Cuba in May with Tractors and seen a lot of Castro. He asked questions about Fidel, what type person he is, personally, politically, etc. I told JFK of Castro's remarks about JFK that Castro thought tt despite Bay of Pigs, JFK was the only American politician with whom he could deal in terms of improved relations, etc. JFK asked about how strong Castro regime is, etc. whether new guerrilla operations by US would make sense. He talked about the need of controlling CIA in some way so that CIA wouldn't construct another operation like Bay of Pigs. Said CIA was a problem in government; he and Bobby wanted to deal with it — I guess to control CIA better. Then, suddenly, Pres leaned forward and asked me: "What would you think if I ordered Castro to be assassinated?" I said this would be terrible idea because a) it probably wouldn't do away with regime; on contrary it would strengthen it, and b) I felt personally US had no business in assassinations. JFK then said he was testing me, that he felt the same way — he added "I'm glad you feel the same way" — because indeed US morally must not be part to assassinations. JFK said he raised question because he was under terrific pressure from advisers (think he said intelligence people, but not positive) to okay a Castro murder. Sed he was resisting pressures... Dick thinks this may have to do with the Guantanamo thing we been hearing about. Navy? Meeting was little after 11 AM. First, RNG and TS waited in Fish Room. Also, JFK sed something about setting up special group on Cuba, to take new look at whole Cuban thing from all points of view. No details. Didn't say if group would be at WH or where...

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